

MARY HARTMAN MARY HARTMAN

EPISODE #99

by

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VTR DATE:

CAST OF CHARACTERS

MARY.	LOUISE LASSER
TOM	GREG MULLAVEY
LORETTA	MARY KAY PLACE
CHARLIE	GRAHAM JARVIS
MARTHA.	DODY GOODMAN
GRANDPA LARKIN.	VICTOR KILIAN
BOB GILROY.	TOM TROUP

SETS

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MARY'S KITCHEN - A FEW MINUTE LATER - NIGHT
LIMBO PHONE - SHUMWAY KITCHEN
(Mary, Loretta, Grandpa)

ACT ONEMARY'S KITCHEN - NEXT MORNING

MARY AT THE TABLE, MOROSELY WATCHING TELEVISION. THERE IS A SMOKING CIGARETTE IN ASHTRAY. SHE LIGHTS ANOTHER CIGARETTE, NOTICES THAT SHE ALREADY HAS A CIGARETTE GOING, HAS SOME NERVOUS DIFFICULTY DECIDING WHICH ONE TO SNUFF OUT. MARTHA ENTERS.

MARTHA

I want to have a heart to heart talk with you. A real heart to heart.

Good morning, Mary.

MARY

That's what I need. That's what I really need. Somebody to talk to. Somebody who can sympathize and understand what I'm going through. I really need to let it all out. There's only one trouble. Good morning, Ma.

MARTHA

What? What's the only trouble?

MARY

The mood I'm in, I don't feel like talking to anybody.

MARTHA

Mary, I'm sure Tom really wants to come back to you. All you have to do is ask him to.

MARY

Ma, I can't beg. It's impossible.

MARTHA

It's not impossible. It's very easy. All you have to do is say, "Hello, Tom. Come back."

MARY

Ma, it's over.

MARTHA

It's not over. You had an argument. All married couples have arguments. If they didn't, most of the time they wouldn't have anything to talk about.

MARY

It's not just the argument. There's something else. Something that happened.

MARTHA

What? Was it something that happened in Dennis' apartment?

MARY

Who said anything about Dennis? Anyway, it didn't happen in his apartment. It happened in his hospital room.

MARTHA

What could happen in a hospital room?
I mean besides blood transfusions and
things like that?

LORETTA COMES OVER.

LORETTA

I've been so worried about you, Mary,
I hardly got an eye to stay closed all
night. I would of come over earlier this
morning, only before Charlie left for
work, we had kind of a longer goodbye
kiss than usual. Good morning, Martha.
Good morning, Mary.

MARTHA

Good morning, Loretta. I guess we're
all concerned about Mary.

LORETTA

It's just not fair, her being so unhappy
and all. I tried to get the Lord's help
for her by bringing over Reverend Jimmy
Joe last night.

MARTHA

I saw that little darling preaching
on television the other night. He's
just adorable. But is he old enough to
be in that line of work?

LORETTA

Martha, in the eyes of the Lord, we're
all children.

MARTHA

But aren't some of us more childish than others?

LORETTA

Reverend Jimmy Joe is the Lord's chosen spokesman. He speaks for the Lord. If the Lord has something to say, Reverend Jimmy Joe says it for him.

MARTHA

You mean like Ed Reimers speaks for Allstate?

LORETTA

The precise same thing. (TO MARY) But looking at you, I can see that somehow you weren't able to take comfort from Jimmy Joe.

MARY

Loretta, I appreciate your friendship, but I just can't see eye to eye with a little minister.

MARTHA

Maybe that's because your eye is up here and his eye is down there.

LORETTA

Well, he is only four foot six, but I swear his eye is on the sparrow.

(MORE)

LORETTA (CONT'D)

I just want you to know that me and Charlie's gonna stand by you in your dreadful hour of need, because this is your hour of need, Mary -- I mean, I can't think of anything needier than a woman without her man. It's a situation that pains me because you could not get a single love song out of that situation.

MARY

Loretta, please don't sing.

LORETTA

(TO MARY) I won't but I want you to do is come over and have dinner with us tonight.

MARY

Oh, really, I just couldn't be good company. I'd be what they call, you know, a wet blanket. I don't know where that expression came from, but that's what I'd be. Wet and dank, heavy with wetness, and I would put out the fire in the chafing dish of your heart.

LORETTA

Oh, that's good. (SINGING) We was havin' fondue for dinner, I knew we'd never part/ Till you crushed me and put out the fire, in the chafing dish of my heart.

(MORE)

LORETTA (CONT'D)

(BEAT) But, seriously Mary, you need a good meal in you. You're really starting to look puny. Now I want you to come over.

MARY

You're not up to something sneaky, are you? (HASTENS TO ADD:) I mean friendly sneaky, of course. The little minister isn't going to be there, is he?

LORETTA

No, he is not. I swear. Jimmy is not who's gonna be there. I mean, no one's gonna be there. Well, we's gonna be there, of course.

MARTHA

Go ahead, Mary. It'll do you good.

LORETTA

I'm gonna make chicken-fried steak. Down home, we always say chicken-fried steak is a sure cure for what ails you.

MARY

All right, Loretta, I'll come over.

LORETTA

Good.

MARY

But please don't take it personally if
your chicken-fried steak doesn't cure
me.

FADE OUT.

ACT TWOTHE PLANT - THAT AFTERNOON

TOM, SOLO, IS IN PHONE BOOTH.
HE FINISHES DIALING A NUMBER,
WAITS.

TOM

(TO PHONE, WITH FORCED LIGHTNESS WHICH
HE DOES NOT REALLY FEEL) Hi, Heather.
How's my baby?... (HEATHER APPARENTLY
SAYS, "WHO IS THIS?") This is your
Daddy. How are you? Do you miss me?
... My blue sweat shirt? Sure, you can
have it if you want it... Listen,
Heather, let me talk to your mother...
Oh. Well, when she comes back, tell her
I called... Bye.

CHARLIE ENTERS AS TOM HANGS UP
AND COMES OUT OF THE PHONE BOOTH.

CHARLIE

(FRIENDLY) Hey, Tom.

TOM

Hi, Charlie.

CHARLIE

Listen, me and Loretta would like you to
come over and have dinner with us tonight.

TOM

Hey, thanks. I'll take you up on that.
I'm starting to feel a little funny about
mooching off the McCulloughs so much.
Not that they've said anything. But you
know.

CHARLIE

Well, you know you're welcome to mooch
off us any time you want to. It's gonna
be a good dinner tonight. Loretta's
whomping up her specialty. Chicken-fried
steak.

TOM

Sounds great. Listen, Charlie, let me
ask you a question.

CHARLIE

Sure.

TOM

I've had dinner over at your house how
many times? A hundred maybe?

CHARLIE

Yeah, we been friends a long time.

TOM

Well, what I want to ask you: how come,
every time, Loretta makes chicken-fried
steak? Is it just a coincidence?

CHARLIE

Well, yeah, that's part of the reason.

TOM

What's the other part?

CHARLIE

It's the only thing she really knows how to make. You've got to understand Loretta's not your basic American housewife. What she is is she's a creative artist. You know: her music. Which she's kind of neglecting these days on account of working for the Worldwide Missionary Crusade. But, anyway, it's still chicken-fried steak.

BOB GILROY ENTERS AND IS ABOUT TO PASS BY WHEN TOM SEES HIM, AND:

TOM

Oh, Bob. Could I talk to you for a minute?

GILROY

I'm kind of in a hurry, Tom. I've got an appointment.

TOM

I just want to talk to you for a minute. Please. It's important. Really.

GILROY

Well, I haven't got much time. What is it?

TOM

Charlie, this is kind of personal. Do you mind?

CHARLIE

No, no, not at all. Go right ahead.

TOM

I mean, would you mind kind of letting
us talk in private?

CHARLIE

Oh. Oh, sure. I'll see you tonight,
huh? Around seven o'clock?

TOM

Okay.

CHARLIE EXITS.

GILROY

Well? Now what's wrong?

TOM

(TORN APART INSIDE) I don't know. I
really don't know.

GILROY

(IMPATIENT) Well, if you don't tell me
what's wrong, how do you expect me to
give you any help?

TOM

Okay, I'm sorry, I'll try. I mean,
I've really got to talk to somebody about
this or I'll go out of my gourd. I mean,
somebody who understands about these
things. Somebody like you. A psychologist.

GILROY

Will you get to the point?

TOM

Well, I guess you know what's happening. With me and Mary. I know you had a talk with her. I guess she told you about us splitting up.

GILROY

Among other things. In my profession, I hear some weird things from some weird people, but you two really take the cake.

TOM

I guess you know about her being in some guy's apartment with her clothes off. She told me nothing happened...

GILROY

Do you believe her?

TOM

Yeah, I guess. One thing about Mary, she never lies to me.

GILROY

Well, if that's the way it is, what do you want from me? Why don't you talk it out with her?

TOM

(VERY DISTURBED) That's the thing. We can't talk. We just can't talk.

GILROY

Why not?

TOM

(IN EMOTIONAL TURMOIL) I don't know. That's just the way it is. You don't know what it's like. It's like being locked up in a coffin. I just don't know how to handle it. I love Mary. I swear to God I love her. And I know she loves me. So we ought to be happy together, right? So how come we're miserable? I mean, really miserable? I don't think we're bad people. We don't want to hurt each other. I don't want to make her unhappy. I'd lay down my life for her. And I'm sure she doesn't want to make me miserable. But we can't seem to get a handle on this thing. We're trying to make each other happy and all we're doing is torturing each other. What kind of a way is that to live?

GILROY

I really have to get to my appointment.

TOM

Look, please. Just tell me if you think I'm right.

GILROY

Right about what?

TOM

Well, there is a difference between a guy going to a woman's apartment and a woman, especially a married woman, going to a guy's apartment, isn't there?

GILROY

I don't know what you're getting all bent out of shape for if nothing happened to your wife when she went to the guy's apartment.

TOM

It's the principle of the thing.

GILROY

Well, you should be able to talk it out with her. And if you talk that out, you can talk out what happened when she went to his hospital room.

TOM

His hospital room? What happened in his hospital room?

GILROY

You mean, you didn't know about his hospital room?

TOM

Of course, I didn't know about his hospital room! What happened in his hospital room? What happened in his hospital room?

GILROY

Look, Mr. Hartman, I've got to go --

TOM

You don't mean that my wife and a heart
attack patient at Fernwood Receiving --?

GILROY

With nurses and doctors not ten feet
away, and a chair propped up against the
door. I'll tell you, Mr. Hartman, you and
your wife are too much for me. I'm just
an industrial psychologist. Work stress,
job dissatisfaction, but not VD and whoopee
in the cardiac care unit. What you need
is a professional psychiatrist. And not
just some ordinary psychiatrist. What you
two need is Sigmund Freud!

GILROY EXITS. TOM IS TORN APART.

FADE OUT.

ACT THREEHAGGERS' LIVING ROOM - THAT EVENING

LORETTA AND CHARLIE AWAITING THEIR
DINNER GUESTS.

CHARLIE

I sure hope this turns out to be a happy
evening for Mary.

LORETTA

Yeah, the poor thing really needs some
cheering up. Too bad she can't take
some comfort from the Lord, the way we
do in times of need.

CHARLIE

Well, maybe this'll work tonight. I
guess she's more comfortable with you.

LORETTA

I suppose. After all, she knows me
better than she does Him.

SFX: DOORBELL RINGS.

LORETTA (CONT'D)

I'll get it.

LORETTA OPENS FRONT DOOR, ADMITTING
MARY WHO CARRIES A BOTTLE OF WINE.
ALL AD LIB EASY GREETINGS AS
BETWEEN INTIMATES.

MARY

I brought a little present. Some wine
for dinner. (HANDS BOTTLE TO LORETTA)

LORETTA

Oh, Mary, that was right thoughtful.
(READS THE LABEL) Look, Charlie, Blue Nun.

MARY

It goes with anything. I know we're
having chicken-fried steak, but if you're
having fish or something tomorrow, you
can drink what's left over.

CHARLIE

Well, thank you.

MARY

My, the house looks nice. I hope you
didn't straighten it up just for me.

LORETTA

Tell her, Charlie.

CHARLIE

No. You tell her.

LORETTA

(TO MARY) We've got a little surprise
for you.

MARY

Really? What? What's the surprise?
I love surprises. Especially if they're
nice.

(MORE)

MARY (CONT'D)

Ma had a surprise birthday party for me when I was eight years old. It was really a surprise. You know, when everybody jumps up and says, "Surprise, surprise!" I was so surprised, I threw up. So what's the surprise?

LORETTA

Well, somebody else is coming over.

MARY

Who?

CHARLIE

Tom.

MARY

Tom Hartman? My husband?

CHARLIE

That's the only Tom we know.

LORETTA

And the nicest.

MARY

Oh, Loretta, that is really a wonderful surprise. Oh, thank you. Of course, it won't really be a surprise because you told me he's coming. But thanks, anyway.

LORETTA

You two simply have to get back together again. Loving each other as much as you do and all.

MARY

You're right, Loretta. You are so right.
That is exactly what I was saying to myself
before I came over. I guess Tom has been
saying it to himself, too.

CHARLIE

I'm sure he has.

MARY

I know he has. He called me up today.

LORETTA

Really? What did he say?

MARY

He said to tell me he called.

CHARLIE

(HUH??) What?

MARY

I wasn't home. He talked to Heather.

CHARLIE

Oh.

MARY

I called him back. You know, at the
McCulloughs.

LORETTA

Mary, that was a very intelligent thing
to do. I mean, lots of women wouldn't
of called back on account of foolish
pride.

(MORE)

LORETTA (CONT'D)

But you're intelligent and you know that happiness is more important than pride and you made that call, no matter how degrading it was.

MARY

Thank you, Loretta.

LORETTA

I'll just bet you had a warm, loving conversation. What did you say?

MARY

I said to tell him I called.

LORETTA

(DISAPPOINTED) He wasn't there?

MARY

No.

CHARLIE

Well, he'll be here. And pretty quick.

MARY

(EXCITED) If I'd known he was coming, I would have worn my blue chiffon. That's his favorite. How do I look?

LORETTA

You look just beautiful.

MARY

Well, maybe I better go to the little girls' room and comb my hair.

(MORE)

MARY (CONT'D)

I just combed it, but I wasn't paying attention because I thought it was going to be just us three for dinner. Not that I didn't want to look nice for you, but, after all, you haven't been living with me for the past three days and he has. So excuse me, will you?

LORETTA

Of course.

MARY EXITS INTO INNER ROOM.

CHARLIE

(SMILES) Man, she's as excited as a hound dog picking up a possum's smell.

LORETTA

She's on the scent of love, Charlie.
Say, that's a great title for a song.
"The Scent of Love". (AD LIBS A TUNE)
Love has a scent that's in my nose.
I'm sniffing love and the feeling grows...

SFX: DOORBELL RINGS.

CHARLIE

I'll get it.

CHARLIE OPENS THE FRONT DOOR,
ADMITTING TOM, WHO IS DEFINITELY
-- BUT NOT FALLING DOWN -- DRUNK.

CHARLIE

Hi, Tom.

TOM

Hi. Hi, Loretta, hah's it goin'?

CHARLIE

Tom, you been bending the elbow a little bit?

TOM

I had a couple of belts.

CHARLIE

More than a couple, if you ask me.

TOM

Well, so what? Sometimes a guy doesn't have any choice and he has to drown his sorrows. I had some rotten news today.

LORETTA

Well, you're gonna get some good news in a minute. Wait 'til you see who's here.

MARY ENTERS, LOOKING LIKE SHE'S ENTERING HER BRIDAL CHAMBER.

MARY

Hello, Tom.

TOM

(BEAT AS HE STARES UNLOVINGLY AT MARY) Hello?

(MORE)

TOM (CONT'D)

You mean you can just stand there
and say hello to me after what you
did?

MARY

(TO LORETTA) I should have worn my
blue chiffon.

TOM

Is that what tramps are wearing?

CHARLIE

Hey, now, wait a minute, Tom...

TOM

Don't wait a minute me! Ask her
what she did in Foley's hospital
room!

LORETTA

Tom, you're a guest in my house, but
I'm not gonna let you talk that way
to this sweet little thing.

TOM

Sweet thing??? You call cheating
on her husband in full view of all of
Fernwood Receiving a sweet thing?

MARY

(CRYING) It wasn't in full view, Tom.
We had the door closed.

LORETTA

(SHOCKED) You mean, you did?

CHARLIE

Now, look, Tom, I don't know what this
is all about, but...

TOM

Well, I know what it's all about and
so does she!

LORETTA

Tom, she's your wife!

TOM

Not any more, she's not! Anybody who
did what she did in a hospital room
is no wife of mine!

TOM EXITS, SLAMMING THE DOOR
BEHIND HIM. SHOCKED PAUSE.
MARY EMITS HER ANGST SOUND.

FADE OUT.

ACT FOURMARY'S KITCHEN - A FEW MINUTES LATER (NIGHT)

EMPTY. LORETTA COMES IN WITH A
VERY BADLY SHAKEN MARY. LORETTA
NATURALLY VERY CONCERNED FOR HER
FRIEND.

LORETTA

Mary, I really don't think you should of
rushed home like this without even eating
nothing. You've gotta keep up your
strength. A good serving of some of my
chicken-friend steak which is deep-fried
in natural chicken fat...

MARY

Loretta, please. I know you're trying
to help me, but I'm getting sick to
my stomach.

LORETTA

It's the emotion you're under. Well,
you need your strength, Mary, and if
you can't take strength from vittles,
the next best things is the Lord. Maybe
if we sat down and belted out a few real
rousing hymns...

MARY

No. No music. Please.

LORETTA

All right... how about confession?

MARY

What?

LORETTA

Confession. That's always a relief from emotion. So maybe if you told me what did happen in Sergeant Foley's hospital room, me keeping it in the strictest confidence, of course...

MARY

Not now.

LORETTA

There must be something I can do for you, honey.

MARY

There is.

LORETTA

What? I'll do anything. Not just cause you're my best friend, but cause it's my Christian duty. Tell me what I can do.

MARY

This is something I wouldn't ask of just anybody...

LORETTA

I ain't just anybody. I mean, not in our special relationship, yours and mine.

MARY

I know. That's why I know I can ask you to do this for me.

LORETTA

What?

MARY

Go home.

LORETTA

And leave you in your hour of need?

MARY

What I need in my hour of need is to be alone. I know you want to help me, and that would really be a big help.

LORETTA

Well, if that's what you want, all you have to do is ask me.

MARY

I asked you.

LORETTA

All right, Mary. But if you want me, you know where I'll be.

MARY

Where?

LORETTA

Right next door.

MARY

That's right. You live there.

LORETTA

Call me if you need me.

MARY

All right, Loretta. Thanks for everything.

Thanks for inviting me over. It's been

a very nice evening. What am I talking

about? It was the worst evening I ever

had in my whole life. Please go home.

I have to be alone.

LORETTA

All right, Mary.

LORETTA EXITS. MARY WANDERS
AROUND, NERVOUS AND MISERABLE.
SHE TAKES OUT A PACK OF
CIGARETTES, LOOKS AT IT.

MARY

(READS:) "The Surgeon General has
determined that cigarette smoking is
dangerous to your health"... What about
husbands who call you a tramp? Does,
the Surgeon General think that's good
for your health?

SHE LIGHTS A CIGARETTE, PACES,
AGONIZES, GOES TO PHONE, DIALS,
WAITS. FOLLOWING IS TWO WAY
WITH GRANDPA IN SHUMWAY KITCHEN.

GRANDPA

Hello.

MARY

Grandpa, this is Mary. Are you busy?

GRANDPA

I'm watching a Claudette Colbert movie on TV. I saw it so long ago, I forget how it ends. I've been waiting twenty years for it to get on TV. If I miss the ending now, I'll have to wait another twenty years to see it and I'm not sure I'll make it that long. Did you want something?

MARY

No, it's all right. Let me talk to Ma.

GRANDPA

She's not here. She went to a VFW meeting with whatshisname. Some guy is giving a speech about communists and gun control. I don't know why they bothered to go. I could have told them what the guy would say. Communists and gun control -- he's against both of them. Is there anything you want me to tell Martha when she gets home?

MARY

No, it's all right. Thanks.

GRANDPA

You want me to call you when I find out how the movie ends?

MARY

I'll talk to you tomorrow.

GRANDPA

Okay.

MARY

Goodbye, Grandpa.

SHE HANGS UP. CAMERA STAYS WITH HER. SHE LIGHTS ANOTHER CIGARETTE. SHE SITS MISERABLE AT TABLE. SHE STARTS TO SHAKE. SHE'S CLOSE TO BREAKING UP. SHE GOES TO PHONE, DIALS 411.

MARY

(TO PHONE) Information?... Who do I call for help?... What kind of help? I can use any kind I can get. I mean I really need help. I mean now. Is there anybody who specializes in that?... The Help Line?... Do they help? Yes, I suppose they do. Otherwise they wouldn't call themselves that. What's their number? Thank you... (DISCONNECTS, THEN DIALS AGAIN) Hello, Help?... Help!

FADE OUT.

END OF EPISODE #99